

WE CLAIM:

- 1 1. A zero turning radius power mower for operation
- 2 by a standing operator, comprising:
- 3 an engine;
- 4 at least one cutting member powered by said
- 5 engine;
- 6 first and second rear drive wheels each
- 7 independently driveable in both forward and reverse
- 8 directions so as to allow for substantially zero radius
- 9 turning of the mower when said first and second rear
- 10 drive wheels are driven in a predetermined manner;
- 11 a riding platform for supporting feet of the
- 12 standing operator, said riding platform located
- 13 vertically below or substantially near an axis of at
- 14 least one of said first and second rear drive wheels; and
- 15 a handle assembly moveable between (i) a walk-
- 16 behind position located rearwardly of said axis of at
- 17 least one of said rear drive wheels and (ii) a stand-on
- 18 position located forward of said axis of at least one of
- 19 said rear drive wheels, so that said handle assembly when
- 20 in said walk-behind position is located such that the
- 21 operator can operate the mower when walking or otherwise

22 trailing behind the mower, and said handle assembly when
23 in said stand-on position is located so that the operator
24 can operate the mower when standing on said riding
25 platform.

1 2. The mower of claim 1, wherein the handle
2 assembly pivots about a substantially horizontal axis
3 from said walk-behind position to said stand-on position,
4 and vice versa.

1 3. The mower of claim 2, wherein said handle
2 assembly further comprises rotatable means for allowing a
3 pivotal lever member for use in controlling said rear
4 drive wheels to pivot about its axis in the same
5 direction regardless of whether the handle assembly is in
6 said stand-on or said walk-behind position.

1 4. The mower of claim 1, wherein said handle
2 assembly further includes rigid bar or rod means for
3 maintaining a dashboard portion of said handle assembly
4 in substantially the same orientation relative to the
5 ground during pivotal movement of said handle assembly

6 and said dashboard portion between said stand-on and
7 walk-behind positions.

1 5. A zero turning radius power mower for operation
2 by a standing occupant, comprising:

3 an engine;

4 at least one cutting member powered by said
5 engine;

6 first and second rear drive wheels each
7 independently driveable in both forward and reverse
8 directions so as to allow for substantially zero radius
9 turning of the mower when said first and second rear
10 drive wheels are driven in a predetermined manner;

11 a riding foot platform compartment for
12 supporting, and at least partially enclosing, feet of the
13 standing occupant, a foot supporting surface of said foot
14 platform compartment located vertically below or
15 substantially near an axis of at least one of said first
16 and second rear drive wheels; and

17 an engine supporting rigid member for
18 supporting said engine thereon, and wherein a rear edge
19 of said engine supporting rigid member extends rearwardly

20 beyond and over top of a substantial portion of said foot
21 supporting surface.

1 6. The mower of claim 5, wherein a portion of said
2 engine supporting rigid member forms at least a part of
3 an upper wall of said riding platform compartment.

1 7. The mower of claim 5, wherein said engine
2 supporting rigid member includes an engine deck, and said
3 riding platform compartment includes, in addition to said
4 foot supporting surface, first and second spaced sidewall
5 and a top wall, wherein at least a portion of said first
6 sidewall is disposed between said first rear drive wheel
7 and feet of the standing occupant, and at least a portion
8 of said second sidewall is disposed between said second
9 rear drive wheel and feet of the standing occupant.

1 8. The mower of claim 5, wherein said rear edge of
2 said rigid member extends rearwardly over at least about
3 one-third of the total length of said foot supporting
4 surface.

1 9. A zero turning radius power mower for operation
2 by a standing occupant, comprising:
3 an engine;
4 at least one cutting member powered by said
5 engine;
6 first and second rear drive wheels each
7 independently driveable in both forward and reverse
8 directions so as to allow for substantially zero radius
9 turning of the mower when said first and second rear
10 drive wheels are driven in a predetermined manner;
11 a pivoting riding foot platform surface for
12 supporting feet of the standing occupant, said pivoting
13 riding foot platform surface located vertically below or
14 substantially near an axis of at least one of said first
15 and second rear drive wheels; and
16 a deadman switch operatively associated with
17 said pivoting foot platform surface, said deadman switch
18 including means for causing said cutting member to stop
19 rotating when the standing occupant steps off of said
20 foot platform surface.

1 10. The mower of claim 9, wherein said foot
2 platform surface pivots about an axis located proximate
3 the rear of said platform surface so that said cutting
4 member does not stop when the standing occupant places
5 most of his/her weight on the front part of his/her feet
6 while standing on said platform surface.

1 11. The mower of claim 10, further including means
2 for biasing a front section of said platform surface
3 vertically upward, and wherein said deadman switch
4 becomes activated to halt operation of said cutting
5 member when said front section of platform surface pivots
6 upward about said axis.

1 12. The mower of claim 9, further including at
2 least one anti-wheelie member pivotally mounted to said
3 mower proximate the rear end thereof, said anti-wheelie
4 member including means for pivoting into a position for
5 preventing the mower from popping wheelies or flipping
6 backward when the mower is caused to operate up a hill or
7 incline.

1 13. The mower of claim 12, wherein said anti-
2 wheelie member is elongated and includes first and second
3 ends, said first end for engaging the ground in order to
4 prevent the mower from flipping over backward, and said
5 second end being pivotally attached to the mower at a
6 location vertically above at least one of the rear drive
7 wheels.

1 14. The mower of claim 9, further comprising a
2 handle assembly including:

3 a) a rigid non-pivoting handle bar member;

4 b) first right-hand and first left-hand
5 pivoting handle members, each located on one side of said
6 rigid handle bar member and oriented substantially
7 parallel thereto;

8 c) second right-hand and second left-hand
9 pivoting handle members, each located on the other side
10 of said rigid handle bar member and oriented
11 substantially parallel thereto, so that said rigid handle
12 bar member is disposed between (i) said first right and
13 left-hand handle members and (ii) said second right and
14 left-hand handle members; and

15 d) wherein said first right and left-hand
16 handle members each pivot in a first direction in order
17 to cause the mower to move forward and said second right
18 and left-hand handle members each pivot in a different
19 second direction in order to cause the mower to move in a
20 reverse direction.

1 15. The mower of claim 9, further including a pump
2 locking system including a lever located on a handle
3 assembly, said lever including means, when actuated, to
4 simultaneously apply brake force to at least one of said
5 rear drive wheels and lock a hydraulic pump operatively
6 associated with a rear drive wheel in a neutral position.

1 16. The mower of claim 9, further including a thigh
2 rest member protruding upwardly from the rear of the
3 mower for allowing the standing occupant to rest his/her
4 thighs against said rest member during operation of the
5 mower when the occupant is standing upon said platform.

1 17. The mower of claim 16, wherein said thigh rest
2 member is one of a front thigh rest member and a side
3 thigh rest member.